

REMARKS

Claims 1-44 are all the claims currently pending in this Application.

Claim Rejections and Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Blonder et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,448,672 ("Blonder"). Claims 21-44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Blonder. Claims 3-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Blonder, in view of Murata et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,123,464 ("Murata"). Claims 11-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Blonder, in view of Okazaki et al., U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0090172 ("Okazaki").

In response to these rejections, in the 1.111 Amendment of December 13, 2005, Applicants noted that the cited references fail to teach or suggest that the cladding is exposed only in the vicinity of the second end (or both ends) and that the entire optical fiber other than the portion in the vicinity of the end is coated with a metal and/or inorganic material except at the exposed portions. (See claims 1 and 2; see also claims 19 and 20) In response, the Examiner notes that claims 1, 2, 19, and 20 do not specifically recite that only those portions of the cladding are exposed or that the entire fiber other than those portions is coated. With this Amendment, Applicants amend the claims as shown, and again submit that the cited references fail to teach or suggest that the cladding is exposed only in the vicinity of the second end (or both ends) and that the cited references also fail to teach or suggest that the entire fiber other than those portions is coated.

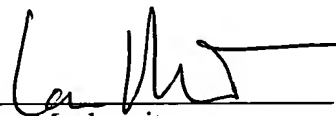
Therefore, in view of the above and those arguments presented in the 1.111 Amendment of December 13, 2005, which are incorporated herein, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 2, 19, and 20 are patentable over the cited combinations of references and that claims 3-18 and 21-44 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependence thereon. Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1-44 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Laura Moskowitz
Registration No. 55,470

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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